

Safer Sex 101 for HIV

There are now many tools to help prevent HIV.
Here's how to reduce your chance of getting or transmitting HIV through sex.

Understand the Risks

Some kinds of sex are riskier than others for getting or transmitting the virus.

- **Anal sex** is when the penis is put inside the rectum (or butt), and it is the riskiest kind of sex for getting or transmitting HIV. Being the bottom or having your partner's penis inside you is much riskier than being the top or putting your penis inside your partner.
- **Vaginal sex** is when the penis is put inside the vagina. Either partner can get HIV during vaginal sex, though it isn't as risky as anal sex.
- **Oral sex** is when the mouth touches the penis, vagina, or rectum. The chance of getting or transmitting HIV through oral sex is extremely low.
- You can't get or transmit HIV from sexual activities that don't involve contact with body fluids (e.g., touching).

The only way to know your HIV status is to get tested. Knowing your status can give you important information and help you make good decisions to prevent getting or transmitting HIV.

Reduce Your Risk

There are a number of ways you can reduce the risk of getting or transmitting HIV.

- If you are living with HIV, get on and stay on treatment, called antiretroviral therapy (ART), to protect your health and greatly reduce your chance of transmitting HIV.
- If you are at high risk for HIV, take daily medicine to prevent HIV, called pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP).
- Take antiretroviral medicine, called post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), if you think you have been exposed to HIV in the last 72 hours and are not on PrEP.



- Get tested and treated for other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Having other STDs increases your risk for getting or transmitting HIV.
- Limit the number of sex partners. Having fewer sexual partners lowers your chances of getting or transmitting HIV.
- Choose less risky activities like oral sex.
- Use condoms the right way every time you have sex.
- Abstinence is the only 100% effective way to prevent HIV.



The more of these actions you take, the safer you can be.

For more information please visit www.cdc.gov/hiv